286 wool and spinning them with the aid of a clay spindle. Grown men spin while they are walking and boys while they are watching the herds at pasture.

The weaver is a professional who is invited to visit a household that has laid by a supply of yarn. He loads the pieces of his portable loom on a donkey, and works for a daily wage. He also makes sacks of goat hair. Sometimes he works in his own home, with yarn that is brought to him. For this kind of work, the yarn is weighed and the price is fixed according to the amount of yarn that is brought by the customer and the measurement of the cloth to be delivered. Since the yarns are spun by children and adults, at all times of the day, and are very irregular, the fabric produced from them is used to make working gowns and jackets for men and women and is extremely coarse and primitive. It sheds water well, since the wool has not been washed in hot water and the yarn retains its natural fat.

287 Felt making is also the work of professionals. For this a kind of screen is used, made of reeds. The screen is laid on the ground and the loose wool is piled on it. Each layer of wool is wetted down with hot water. The screen is then rolled up with the wool, and this bundle is then rolled back and forth for a long time in order to mat the fibers together. The felt is then dried in the sun and is ready for use. The same artisan makes, from fine selected wool, the round felt hats that the Monguors wear. When the round piece of felt has been made and is still wet, it is stretched over a mold to form the hat.

281 The preparation of the furs used by the Monguors is a household industry. The sheep and goat skins are washed, the fat is scraped off, and the skins are dried. They are then steeped in an earthenware jar containing a mixture of salt, flour, and the yeast that is used for fermenting wine, in the proportions of one handful of salt, one pound of flour, and one brick of yeast for each skin. The steeping lasts for fourteen days in the summer or twenty-one days in winter. When the steeping has been completed, the skins are washed in the river, dried in the shade, and are then ready for use. Coats made of such skins are cut and sewn by a professional artisan at the home of the Monguor customer.

326 Silversmiths make earrings, bracelets, finger rings, and the plates, cups, and pins that are used for the headdresses. They also make the sheaths that hold knife and chopsticks. The work done by Monguor silversmiths can always be distinguished from that done by Chinese, but as their work is done for a small population, it is bound to remain on a very small scale.

•467 In spite of the fact that the Monguors, as subjects of their own T'u-ssu, are exempt in general from Chinese 651 demands for corvée labor, in recent years carpenters and stonecutters who make millstones have been affected by these demands. The Chinese officials make their demands on the professional guilds; the individual worker is not paid for such work, and his guild must pay him when he has been summoned for unpaid official work.

1: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

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FIG. 8. Spinning handicraft. Two girls of Monguor origin, whose parents had attached themselves to a group of Tibetans enrolled as subjects of the Ch'i T'u-ssu. They wear the Tibetan clothes typical of the Huari region north of Hsining. The elder girl is spinning thread, which passes over a hook at the end of the stick thrust into her collar at the back of the neck. She keeps a bundle of wool in the bosom of her gown and from it twists the yarn which is rolled on to the spindle which she holds in her left hand. The thread then passes over the hook of the stick, to stretch and straighten it. The younger sister is fluffing a bundle of wool to prepare it for her elder sister.

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Monguor artisans engaged in such work must perforce join the Chinese guilds when they are summoned to work on official buildings.

The shamans are also affected by the need for association with a guild. Whenever there is an eclipse of the sun or moon the shamans are likely to be summoned to the nearest Chinese town to help, by their incantations, with the "liberation" of the sun or moon. In this they are associated with the Chinese Taoist priests. I knew of one case in which there was a quarrel between the shamans of two Monguor villages. They brought their disagreement before the chief of the religious corporation, a Taoist priest, who settled the matter.

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The question of the origin of specialized artisan crafts is an interesting problem. In the case of the Monguors, most work is done in the household and there is little need for specialized skills. When there is such a need, moreover, most people cannot afford to hire a skilled craftsman to come from a Chinese town. These con-

[P. 126b]

1: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

415 planks. Some of these planks are cut to the standard measurements for making coffins, and sold in the towns.
313 Another woodworking trade is the making of pack saddles for donkeys, mules, and oxen, which are sold either in the towns or at fairs.

THE CITY BECOMES THE CENTER OF ECONOMIC LIFE

177 At the end of this chapter it is interesting to consider
369 from what center originated the new economic life of the Monguors, how it developed, and what were the repercussions on the social organization of the Monguor clans, as they evolved away from pastoralism. For nearly four centuries the economic life of the Monguors was fraught with insecurity and calamities, and deprived of the peace that is the first requirement for social welfare. Indeed the economic conditions of the Monguors and of the whole country improved only when the Ch'ing dynasty secured peace, and this improvement depended on the vitality of commerce. No trade of real importance had been able to coexist with insecurity on the roads, since trade requires normal and regular transportation facilities and a safe access to the outlets of commerce. For the center of a developed economy a city is required. In this case the city was Hsining, with its group of professional merchants from all over China, associated in guilds according to the Chinese custom.

177 The prefectural city of Hsining is advantageously situ-
369 ated on the river of the same name, a tributary of the
632 Yellow River, which flows past Lanchou, the capital of
[487] the province. Hsining is also on the road from Peking to Lhasa and India. It was the seat of the political and military administration of the country, and the merchants settled there because it was a fortified and garrisoned city. Under the older order in China important concerns maintained their headquarters in major cities and sent their agents to less secure secondary towns and villages to open branch offices.

177 The merchants of the city monopolized the whole com-
369 merce of the country. They sent out their agents to buy
441 up as much grain, oil, and wine (alcohol) as possible;
467 they bought the products collected by peddlers; their agents pitched their tents at lamasery fairs and festivals and at clan diets, to provide people with groceries, cloth, silk, and hardware. The small shopkeepers scattered over the country bought their wares from the wholesale merchants in Hsining. The guilds enjoyed the privileges of trading with the nomad caravans, which had to stop and unload at their inns in order to sell their merchandise, and to buy through them the things they wanted, such as flour, oil, and cloth.

Farmers were not allowed to sell flour, oil, and other products directly to the caravans. They had to go through the guild of the *Hsieh chia*, those who controlled the "rest places." Thus the guild alone controlled the trade in the high-priced furs and other articles carried

1: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1954 AE9 Monguor AE9

by the caravans. Only the guilds of large towns, like Hsining, had connections with the guilds of other cities and could afford the cost of sending boats and rafts to Lanchou, the capital of Kansu. In this way the entire economy was dominated by the city merchants. The fair and festival centers never grew to the extent of themselves becoming important cities, because they were unable to attract permanent merchants, since the attendance of the people was only seasonal and there was no permanent security. These local fairs merely provided the farmers at certain dates with their peculiar usual necessities of life.

Merchant activity provoked deep repercussions in the Monguor society, whose nobles and commoners, during centuries of disorder, had lived a rather precarious existence, their economy being limited by the boundaries of their clans and the production only of necessities within their own small groups. Both the economic and the political organization of the Monguor clans had been founded exclusively on the possession of territory. Taxes, corvées, military service, and the administration of justice had been rooted in the ownership of territory by the T'u-ssu, the commoners being affected in a peculiar and disadvantageous way. The collection of the taxes of certain villages by the "houses" of the nobles had, however, been reduced to negligible significance after four centuries, and the financial conditions of nobles and commoners had become more equal. Some of the commoners, who were more numerous than the nobles, had become richer than the best of the nobles, and rivals in wealth even of the T'u-ssu. Since wealth and riches are equated, in Asia, with prestige and authority, it is no wonder that members of the commoner group were easily accepted to fulfill the offices of chiefs and elders in the villages, and that the administration of the villages passed into their hands. In this way the new economic conditions tended to equalize, and perhaps even to reverse, the original social inequality between nobles and commoners. Under the peace and order of the Manchu dynasty, the city merchants were protected. Headstrong and daring young men followed the caravans to Lhasa and made money by selling mules and horses. Monguors could open small shops in the countryside, and invest capital, in association with the Chinese merchants, in oil and flour mills. Fishermen could venture to Kukunor, and others to burn charcoal in the mountains or saw planks to sell in the city. Peace provided the opportunities for taking risks in commerce, and the focus of these opportunities, which transformed both the economic and the social life of the Monguors, was the city.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this study of the origin and organization of the Monguor clans, their constituent elements, their chiefs, their internal rights and obligations and the actual administration and family and economic life, it is perti-